



Your guide to
byways
and **motor vehicles**





The advice in this leaflet is for all those wishing to know more about using byways or unsealed roads in vehicles in Essex.



A byway is waymarked by this sign

The background colour may be different but the arrow should always be red.

A byway is defined as meaning **‘byway open to all traffic’**. They can be used by **walkers, horse riders, motorised vehicles** and **carriage drivers**.

Byways available in Essex by district:

District	Length in km	District	Length in km
Basildon	5.98	Epping Forest	27.70
Braintree	49.48	Harlow	0.35
Brentwood	10.51	Maldon	3.31
Castle Point	0.36	Rochford	10.70
Chelmsford	7.58	Tendring	4.24
Colchester	4.72	Uttlesford	92.61

This adds up to 217.54 km.

There is often a public perception that a great deal of damage is caused by motorised vehicles and there is always pressure on Highway Authorities to close byways to vehicular users. Government research does not support this view, and legislation does not allow routes to be closed without suitable justification. Essex County Council makes every effort to resolve problems including those of surfacing without having to resort to closure, which should only be used when all other measures have failed. **Byways cannot be restricted simply because people do not ‘like’ motorised use of the countryside.** They are part of the public highway network even if they don’t look exactly like a road!

VEHICLES

Before using your vehicle on a byway you must ensure it is:

- Road worthy – **this includes having a valid MoT if one is needed**
- Insured
- Taxed (Vehicle Excise Duty paid and disc displayed)
- Showing a visible number plate
- Driven by someone with the appropriate driving licence

If you ride or drive where you do not have any rights or permission from a landowner, you might be committing a criminal offence. The Police now have more powers to act against this type of activity and can take your vehicle from you. Your insurance is also invalid if you are driving where you shouldn’t be.

If you see anyone driving recklessly, with an unlawful vehicle, or on areas which are not permitted then call your district council who may have an **ASBO officer**, or your local Police Station, giving as much information on the vehicle as you can. Make sure you get a crime number in order for it to be followed up.

If you buy your child a mini-moto or similar have you considered where they are going to drive it? Take them to a proper site.

OFF ROAD SITES IN ESSEX

Off road 4x4

Essex, Rochford & district 4x4 club
Canewdon **£20** per day per vehicle
Contact Tim Saunders 01268 776790
(mud terrain tyres recommended)

Essex Off-road Experience

Off-road Track, North Weald, Harlow, Essex
(Has dedicated kiddie track too)
07854 781506 day/01440 761247 eve

MAPS AND SIGNS

There are only **217km** of byways in Essex. A 'green lane' is only a descriptive term, so check the status of the route if you are unsure against the definitive map and/or the list of streets both of which are held by the County Council. **You can view the List of Streets at the main reception in County Hall and the Definitive Map by contacting a member of the team on 01245 437563.**

Ordnance Survey maps may not always be as up to date as you think! Byways can be found on these maps along with UCR's (unclassified county roads) which are often marked as 'other routes with public access'. Be careful however, as it does not state that these routes automatically have vehicular rights and you may find yourself on a route which does not have such rights.

Traffic Regulation Orders – you may come across signs showing '**no motorised traffic**' restricting access to motorised vehicles on some routes. These will be there for a valid reason, either maintenance or possibly protection of flora or fauna. These maybe temporary, seasonal or possibly permanent. **Do not ignore these signs.**

Voluntary Restraint – This is used as a more informal measure which is supported by **LARA (Land Access Recreation Association)** to help alleviate specific problems on particular routes. The system is generally supported by Highway Authorities, but should always be supported or upheld by users whether or not they are in recognised clubs. All motorised users are requested to co-operate and obey these signs - **failure to do so may lead to more formal measures being introduced.**



MAINTENANCE

Byways are maintained by the **Highway Authority**, and for Essex Byways this is Essex County Council. If you feel a byway is in a poor state of repair then please report it to the County Council by phone on 0845 7430430 or via post to **Highways and Transportation, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1QH** and it will be passed on to the correct area Rights of Way Officer or via email: pro.w.web@essexcc.gov.uk



OBSTRUCTIONS

If you come across an obstruction, such as a tree blocking your path, you are allowed to move it to enable you to continue. If that is not possible, you can deviate around it.

Any obstructions either accidental or deliberate such as a locked gate, should be reported to the Highway Authority.

VEHICULAR USERS CODE OF PRACTICE FOR USERS

This code of practice has been drawn from various sources and in conjunction with various user groups.

- **Use only routes that you know carry vehicular rights. If in doubt check with the Highway Authority.**
- **Travel at a safe and appropriate speed for conditions and locations. Voluntary maximum of 20mph.**
- **Always give way to others and if appropriate switch off engines.**
- **Avoid using routes in times of poor weather when surfaces are more easily damaged.**
- **Take care not to damage edges/verges**
- **If travelling in a group increase spacing to reduce impact on the terrain.**
- **Follow the Countryside Code.**

CONCLUSION

Byways are the only public right of way open to all types of user, pedestrian, horse rider, cyclist and motorist and you must be aware that if you use these routes in any capacity, you are likely to come across these other users who have a legitimate right to be there. Please respect their use of these byways even if it is different to yours, by being courteous and be prepared to slow down or give way or stop if necessary.

Useful Links

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside>

**This booklet is issued by Essex County Council
Public Rights of Way. You can contact us
in the following ways:**

By telephoning our Helpline:

on 0845 603 7631

By post:

Essex County Council
Freepost CL289
County Hall, Chelmsford CM1 1YY

By email:

prow.web@essexcc.gov.uk

By textphone for people with hearing difficulties:

0845 7430 430

**The information contained in this booklet is available
in alternative formats: large print, braille, audio tape or disk.
We can also translate this information into other languages.**

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